LONG (J. W.)

CHARACTER, THE TRUE TEST OF THE PHYSICIAN.

BY J. W. LONG, M. D., Randleman N. C.

Lecturer on Urinalysis in the School of Pharmacy, Trinity College, N. C.; Second Vice-President of the State Medical Society; Member of the Southern Surgical and Gynæcological Society; Secretary of the Randolph County Medical Society, etc.

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Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—I count myself most happy to stand in this presence this evening, as, in some sense, the representative of the North Carolina Medical Society. That I have long coveted this honor, I shall not gainsay, but that I did not seek it, those who were foremost in electing me to be orator for 1892 will bear me out in saying. I have always believed and practised the maxim that "the place should seek the man."

It is an honor to represent our State Society at any time or place, and it gives me special pleasure to bear these relations before a Wilmington audience. The Cape Fear section has always been noted for its culture, hospitality and patriotism. Of its patriotism it may be said that, when on the 24th day of December, 1864, fifty-two federal war vessels ranged themselves in line of battle opposite Fort Fisher, and opened a bombardment unprecedented in the history of the world for its terrible energy and fury, throwing over twenty thousand shot and shell against the little fort in their futile attempt to reduce it—that under the intrepid Whiting and Lamb "even the boys were men in those days." Where men dared show themselves the junior reserves were to be found. There was no

*Being the Annual Oration delivered at Wilmington, N. C., in the hall of the Y. M. C. A. building, May 18th, 1892, before the Thirty-ninth Meeting of the North Carolina State Medical Society and the citizens of Wilmington.

shrinking with them, no faltering because of the trembling hand and weeping eye of the father and mother at home. No duty was neglected, no personal danger avoided, but with a firm trust in the goodness of God and the justice of their cause, those beardless boys stood forward in the hour of danger like men. 'Tis said the children of this city, boys from ten to fifteen years old, secured arms on that memorable Christmas eve, and patrolled the city all night long, guarding the prisoners, and keeping watch over their homes, that every available man might go to the rescue of Fisher. History can afford no greater instance of true heroism than the soldier boys of Wilmington. I am glad to look into the faces of a community which produces such boys as they.

Besides this, an acquaintance with the profession of the city, and a careful reading of the biographies of your physicians who have gone to their reward, convince me that Wilmington has been, and is, the birth-place and home of some of the grandest men that ever adorned our ranks.

Dr. Nathaniel Hill, educated in Edinburgh; Dr. James F. McRee, who had a wonderful brain, worked out the whole science of medicine of his day, cultivated botany and natural history, and brought together a great collection of choicest books; Dr. A. J. de Rosset, one of the first graduates at the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. James H. Dickson, the ripest scholar of his day, the first president of the Board of Medical Examiners, ex-president of the State Medical Society, who died at his post of yellow fever in the epidemic of 1862; and Dr. George William Thomas, who lived among you for thirty years, and laid his life down in trying to save that of a little child—were men whose works would perpetuate the fame of any city, and whose names will go down in the annals of our science as benefactors of mankind.

The position of orator, in a body like ours, is somewhat unique, in that the orator is expected to address a mixed audience, composed of both profession and laity. He cannot well choose a purely scientific subject, for fear the laity will not be interested, nor would it be in good taste for him to discuss a question strictly non-scientific, for then the profession would not be fairly represented. So that casting about between Scylla and Charybdis, the orator is often forced to write a shot-gun prescription, and endeavor to meet all indications in the same dose. On a similar occasion, I undertook to find a subject in which both profession and laity were alike interested, but after much research could find nothing in which they had a mutual interest except doctors' bills. Even in this matter, I found they were very much divided—the profession acting ~~strongly~~ strangely like the prosecutor, while the laity decided with the defendant.

However, a more extended experience and observation have taught me that the most vital point of interest between the profession and the laity—between the doctor and the patient, is the *character* of each. The greatest point of difference in this particular is, as I see it, that the patient can choose what kind of a character he will have for his physician, while the physician has very little if any choice as to the character of the patients he will attend. You may say, "it matters not what kind of a character a patient has, just so the doctor gets his fee." I grant your assertion. If a doctor is going about simply to glean dollars, it makes little difference to him whether those dollars come from an honest man, or a highwayman. But I am not representing that kind of a doctor. Besides, a doctor is not a mere machine, nor do patients always pay cash—*i. e.*, up in Randolph—of course they do in Wilmington. Again, a physician's success depends so much upon the result and influence of each individual case, that every case must be considered a link in the chain of his success. A doctor may have two cases

exactly alike as to cause, symptoms, pathology, etc., yet a moment's reflection will convince us that the outcome of these two cases, to the physician, will be widely different. One patient will be grateful, gracious, pay his bill promptly, say he thinks you charged him very reasonably, and never ceases telling his friends how successfully you treated him. While the other fellow will complain all the time that he is getting no better, that your medicine don't act right, that Dr. Jones gave him something one time which was just the thing he needed, that he would have been up now had you treated him differently, and when you come to present your bill, "My, my! Why, doctor, you did not come to see me that many times. I did not know you charged extra for coming at night, or for staying all night." Then he puts you off with a promise to "pay you soon," which generally means *no pay at all*, but he will be exceedingly careful to tell every body he sees "how mean you acted."

Think a doctor don't care what kind of a character his patient has? I advise those of you who think that way to try practising medicine a while.

Now as to the doctor. There are many standards by which we may estimate a physician, but the true test by which a physician should be judged is his character. Give me a young man's character, and I can tell you what success he will score in after-life. Give me a doctor's character, and I can tell you how he will apply the great principles of our noble science. Give me his character, and I can tell you how he will meet the oft-recurring emergencies in the practice. Give me his character, and I can tell you how he will treat his patients and the public generally. Give me his character, and I can tell you whether he practises medicine for the sordid love of money, or because he believes his life-work to be a high and holy calling, and he goes forth in the name and spirit of Him who went about the sorrowing wards of this world, casting light into darkness, speaking peace to the troubled, hope to the down-trodden, sight to the blind, music to the ears of the deaf, health to the lame and sick, life to the dead, reason to the maniac, and pardon to the guilty.

You ask me "what is character?" I reply, character is what a man really is —'tis the man. The word "character" primarily means a scratch, or sign, or stamp—a distinctive mark whereby an engraver, or other worker, marks his work as his own. Its use goes back to the days when every brick manufactured on the plains of Shinar, or by the banks of the Nile, received its graven image designating the ruler by whose order that brick was made.

As applied to a person, the word "character" is used in several senses, but primarily it means *personality* or *individuality*, and in that sense we will use it this evening.

Character, then, is that quality which *marks* a man—which distinguishes him from the mass of mankind. There are certain qualities which are common to men, possessed by all. They, of course, do not mark a man's individual character, for they are no more one man's than another's. A great many persons have nothing or next to nothing—either by birth or acquirement—which distinguishes them from the common herd. Hence, such persons are said to have no character, or very little character. On the other hand, there are persons of strong individuality, who are themselves. They think for themselves, act by themselves. They have their own convictions, their own purposes, their own personality. Such persons have character. The tendency of the average man is to do as others do, eat what others eat, drink what others drink, wear what others wear, go where others go. Such a man has nothing to mark or to distinguish him. I would not have you think that obstinacy or eccentricity is character, for they are not,

Obstinacy is mulish, and eccentricities are superficial. Personality, not singularity, is what indicates the man. God-reliant, hell-defiant, and man-resistant personality is the basis of all true character. And just here let us make a sharp distinction between character and reputation. Reputation is what the world says about a man, character is what the man really is. They may be the same, they often are not. This is, perhaps, more distinctively true of physicians than any other class. Take, for instance, the matter of professional ability. Put the question to yourselves. How often have you been praised and credited for abilities you do not possess? On the other hand, how many hundred times have you been disparaged and your abilities underrated to that degree, that if what "they say" about you were true, you ought to be kicked out of the profession. My brother, what your over-zealous friends say about you, on the one hand, and your enemies say, on the other, is only your reputation, and does not affect the issue of this hour. Why, there are people up in my county who would not trust me to prescribe for a simple colic, while there are those who believe I could put a new floor in the fourth ventricle. It is not what the people say about a man, it is what the man really is, that constitutes character. Sam Jones says, "We may know a man by what his neighbors say about him." If that is true, and I think it generally is, some of you doctors are pretty hard cases. But granting the entire truth of what Mr. Jones says, it by no means follows that what a man's neighbors say about him is always true. What they say may be a good basis from which to form an estimate of the man's character, but they may be wholly in error. For instance, his neighbors may say, "He is close, stingy, mean, a veritable Shylock." When the truth is, he is only scrupulously honest and exact. They may say, "He is such a pleasant, agreeable fellow, not even raising a fuss with anybody," when the truth is, he is a miserable sycophant, currying favor with everybody he meets, and without backbone enough to have an opinion of his own. True, these instances are what J. Stewart Mill would call "fallacies of observation," but "these fallacies are peculiar to the mass of mankind." Especially is the public liable to fall into these fallacies in its estimate of a physician's abilities. They estimate a doctor by his style, his manner, by the amount of *Ego* he can judiciously compress into his conversation, and largely by his (apparent) success. Again, public opinion, unlike character, is very capricious, and shifting as the sands of the sea. The popular favorite of to-day may by one failure become the subject of derision on the morrow, while one signally successful case may win the plaudits of the populace. But all this goes for naught when we come to judge a man by the standard we raise to-night. As reputation may be compared to the sands of the sea, at the mercy of every ebb and flow of the restless tide, so character may be compared to the mighty rock standing boldly out from the shore, immovably fixed upon the very foundations of old mother earth, and upon which the sciences, and the religions, and every great enterprise, love to build their light-houses of eternal truth, rescuing the unfortunate and guiding those who would press forward. He who builds upon such a foundation shall never be moved no matter what calamity overtakes him or what opposition confronts him. When Stephen of Colonna was taken captive his enemies asked him in derision, "Where now is your strong fortress?" "In here," he boldly proclaimed, placing his hand on his heart.

Character, what is it? It is the *ruling principle* of a man's life, the *well-spring* of his existence. It is the standard by which he himself shapes and governs all his actions. It is that which makes him magnanimous, and brave, and charitable; true to his convictions, in every sphere of life. Let me illustrate:

An officer in the American army married a northern lady, who, coming home on one occasion from a visit to Canada, smuggled through some dress patterns without paying the custom-house duty on them. Reaching home, she boasted of her exploit to her husband, who immediately sat down and inclosed fifty dollars to the custom-house officials, saying he could not cheat the government he served out of it's just dues. I shall ever be proud to hear that man's name. Just after the war, while a wee bit of a boy, I sat one Sunday afternoon on the front porch with my mother, who was then a young widow. A negro man came in and offered her a roll of greenbacks, saying it was for a cow he had recently bought of her. She quietly but firmly refused to receive the money because it was Sunday. The man insisted, saying he might not offer it again, but she told him she would rather lose the money than to violate the Sabbath. That's what I call character.

But you ask me, "How may we know a doctor's character?" I will give only a few, which, however, may be called the cardinal principles of every true physician's life. Let us consider first the things he does *not* do.

I. He does not advertise. This is an age of advertisement. The wonderful enterprise and restless energy of the newspaper man have convinced the public that the only way to do business is to advertise. Into this seductive vortex, many a doctor, anxious to catch the public eye, has been drawn. A young friend of mine went before the examining board for license. He wrote back to me, "I came through with flying colors. If you think I deserve a little puff, please put one in the county paper for me and I will appreciate it." (Of course he would). I replied to him, "not to be so modest; if he wanted to advertise, have some large posters printed and stuck up at every cross road, or start a paper and call it The Medical News. For quacks didn't do things by halves, and if he was determined to be a quack, be full-blooded." I am glad to add that this young man, who is really a worthy young fellow, thanked me heartily for the timely admonition, and has never since attempted to advertise, but, instead, has gone to work and built up a splendid practice.

No true doctor will allow a friendly editor to give him too many gratuitous personal notices in his paper. But there are other ways of advertising, besides puffs and big head-lines in the newspaper. For instance, here is a sample; I picked this up at a public hotel:

"T. Timothy Tadlock, M. D., Physician and Surgeon, having removed from Huckleberry town to the valley of Break-bone Fever, offers his professional services to the people of Measleville and the surrounding country.

"I am a graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Baltimore, Md., and a licentiate of the North Carolina Board of Medical Examiners.

"Diseases of women and children a specialty. Charges reasonable. All calls answered promptly day or night. T. Timothy Tadlock, M. D."

These fellows always follow their names with a big "M. D., Physician and Surgeon." That is, they are "doctor," as a matter of course, then their title would indicate that they are "doctorem in arte medendi," and, added to these, they are both "physician and surgeon." And I never saw one of them who did not make a "specialty of diseases of women and children."

I have given you an actual case, and, what is worse, "T. Timothy Tadlock, M. D., Physician and Surgeon," is a member of the North Carolina Medical Society.

My, my! How it makes my "blood boil" to see a man who ought to know better prostituting the high and holy calling of medicine to the level of a huckster.

Perhaps the most adroit and taking way for a doctor to advertise himself is to

"blow your own horn, Billy," for in many instances "he that bloweth not his own horn, the same shall not be blown." He must drive very fast, always be in a big hurry, look wise, assume an air of importance, as if the fate of a nation hung upon his words and deeds. Ask him about his practice, and he will say, "I am riding day and night; I haven't slept any for three or four nights;" and I have known some of them to go without eating or sleeping longer than Tanner fasted. But listen to the prodigy: "I travelled 20" (some say 30, some 40) "miles yesterday. I have prescribed for twenty-five or thirty patients to-day. I am making from $15 to $250 every day" (of course he doesn't refer to the fact that his current expenses for the last month are not paid). Now *we* know that he is *lying*, and *he* knows that he is lying, but let's not be too hard on the young man; he is simply *advertising*, and somebody will believe him, especially the old women and the "niggers and poor white trash," who will repeat what the young Æsculapius hath said, with numerous variations and additions.

Now, all this is bad enough in a young blood, just home from college with the odor of the dissecting room still on his fingers, and his ideal professor before his eyes, but to see an old man try to boost himself by such miserable subterfuges is detestable beyond comparison. I don't suppose any doctor in this audience ever advertised. Oh, no!

II. No true doctor ever endorses quacks or quack-remedies. Ever since the days when the priesthood and medicine-man were combined in one, and he had to take the Hyppocratic oath to divulge no secret intrusted to him, medicine has furnished a vast and fertile field for humbuggery and charlatanism. The shadows of the superstitions of the dark ages seem yet to linger upon the mind of the public, and like Banquo's ghost, "will not down." I have but to mention Perkinism, to remind you how the popular mind has been swayed and deluded by a "will o' the wisp," by which hundreds of thousands were treated and many even cured, by the simple application of two metal or wooden tractors without the presence or semblance of a battery. I need name only a few of the patent medicines flooding the country to-day to recall the faith which the public places in quack remedies. Baby lulled to sleep with "Mother Winslow's Soothing Syrup;" Mary's headache cured with "Bradycrotine;" Sammy's rheumatism rubbed out with "Perry Davis' Pain Killer;" Mr. Dude's blood renovated by "S. S. S.;" the old man gets too lazy to work, has the chronic headache, and flies to "Warner' Safe Kidney Cure" for relief; and mother, poor old soul, she's broken down waiting on this complaining family, and, as a matter of course, resorts to "Pierce's Favorite Prescription." The only ingredients necessary to make a patent medicine are a few bitter herbs and a heap of mean whiskey; and the only condition necessary to sell it are a fraud for a vender and a fool for a buyer.

I repeat it, that no true physician will ever endorse these vile nostrums; and more, he will never lose an opportunity to expose them to the public. I made a talk along this line on one occasion before our County Medical Society, at the close of which an eminent lawyer came to me and said, "You are right, doctor; the people cannot be expected to know better concerning these things until the profession teaches them." In the highest sense of the word, the physician is the guardian of the people's health, and for him to endorse, or prescribe, or sell these cure-all remedies, or to send confiding patients to traveling opticians or dealers in glasses, to have their errors of refractions corrected, is to be false to his trust in every sense of the word. Your practice may have attained such magnificent proportions that you can afford to lose these cases, but you are false to your pa-

tient and to the public who believe in you, false to your neighbor who is an expert oculist, and false to the profession whose escutcheon you have lowered and trailed in the dirt of ignorance and superstition.

III. There is another distinguishing trait between the true and false physician, the man of character and the man who lacks it. I know no better name for it than *rascality*. The physician who percusses a slightly congested lung or irritable heart, gives an unfavorable prognosis, and prescribes a nauseating mixture, is, nine times out of ten, an impostor. The physician who "just does" get to his patient in time to save his life, who is always "breaking up the fever," whose patients would have had pneumonia had they not sent for him "just when they did," is a fit subject for the inside of the penitentiary. The physician who is always "rushed to death" with his patients, who is always finding and removing tumors, who magnifies simple examinations, which his neighbors are doing silently and skilfully every day, into big operations, and whose praise is constantly in the mouth of all the wise old women in the neighborhood, ought to be kicked out of the profession. I say *pulverize* such fellows.

IV. Again, the true physician never *unjustly criticises his brother physicians*. Why, do you know the envyings and jealousies and backbitings we sometimes indulge in have come to make us the by-word and ridicule of every one? Brethren, these things ought not be.

Mr. Bayard Taylor, in one of his books of travel, gives the following incident: Calling at a house to ask concerning his way, a large, vicious, brutish-looking man came out and gave him the desired information. Mr. Taylor afterwards learned that this man was one Keysburg, the only surviving member of a party which a few years before was overtaken in the mountains by the winter snow. When rescued in the spring, this man only was found alive, and he was sitting by a fire over which hung a pot containing the boiling flesh of some of his dead comrades. His face and hands were smeared with blood and grease, and so ravenous was he for the human flesh, that it was by great force they could drag him away. Near by lay the frozen body of a dead ox, which, however, was not so tempting to Keysburg as the flesh of his dead companions. Now, I know doctors who *seem* to live by abusing other doctors. You can spot one of them as soon as he opens his mouth. His first word is a slur at somebody. He will talk about nothing else. And you can hardly drag him away to some more wholesome subject. Although he be surrounded by a whole world of science, and unsolved problems, yet nothing is so attractive to him as the life-blood of some fellow laborer. I say, *away* with such cannibals.

These are some of the *negative qualities* of the physician of character. Now let us notice a few of the *positive* traits:

I. First and foremost among the jewels which cluster around this matchless word "character," is that quality known as *decision*, decision of character—the power to decide. Without this quality the noblest character would have little effect. According to the inspired writer, even the blessings of heaven are withheld from a man who lacks decision of character. "He that wavereth is like the wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed. Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord." (James I, 6-7.)

There are ten thousand questions arising in every physician's practice, upon which hangs the health and life of some confiding patient. Of course, any old woman in the neighborhood could quickly and easily tell what should be done, and she knows to a dead certainty whether or not you treat the case right, but the conscientious man hesitates, and weighs well the merits and issues of the case

before deciding. How often I have been shocked and disgusted at hearing a doctor dismiss a case by saying, "O, pshaw, he's nothing but a nigger, anyway," or, "It's only a baby dead; it's better off."

Take a case of acute intestinal obstruction, call in two or three or four physicians, and let them consult over the case. Just listen to them. One says, "I would give broken doses of calomel, followed by castor oil." Another says, "I would give opium and apply poultices." The third man says, "There is an acute obstruction; calomel and oil will only aggravate, opium and poultices will cover up and mask the symptoms, so the only rational way is to operate, overcome the obstruction, and give the patient a chance to get well." Doctors disagree, family physician called in to decide. He says, "Wait till to-morrow." Result: A first-class funeral. Now, only one out of four had any decision about him; the rest said, "Wait, do something else," and then let the man die.

When Dr. Edward Warren, a North Carolina doctor, was in Egypt, the Khedive was seized with strangulated hernia. The native physicians could not relieve him; they were afraid to try any rational method. Dr. Warren was called in, saw the man's extreme condition and decided at once what should be done, and that quickly. The native doctors fell back and excused themselves from further responsibility in the case. Dr. Warren went ahead, operated, and saved the old Khedive's life. This failure to decide has cost many a valuable life, has robbed many a household of its brightest flower, or of its stay and comforter. This question, what to do, and when to do it, has cost every conscientious physician many and many an anxious hour. But if he is a man of character, you may be sure that when he does decide, his decision will be the very best thing that can be done for you.

II. The physician of character has the courage of his convictions. This is an easy matter when the majority are on your side, but when you are in the minority of one, as I have often found myself, it is no small thing to "speak out in meetin'." A physician is called to see a medical case; he sees at once it is a surgical case, and to save the man's life something must be done promptly. He knows full well that the bare mention of an operation will terrify the patient and set the whole family in an uproar. Oh, yes, I have been there. He also knows further, that if the patient refuses an operation and should get well in spite of his desperate condition, that he will never do any more practice in that neighborhood. To speak out your convictions under such circumstances requires courage.

There is another point where I have seen doctors break down and prove false to their convictions. That is in regard to drinking. There are physicians who attend our annual conventions who would not for the world be seen drinking wine or champagne at home, yea, who are stewards, and deacons, and elders in their church, yet they march into these so-called banquets just like "little men" and drink like "big Injun." Do they think it is right? No. Their conscience says "No." And if they had the courage of their convictions they would not do it. May God speed the day when these wine suppers and champagne receptions shall be banished from our annual meetings.

The true physician has the courage of his convictions in spite of all opposition. You know the same gust of wind which blows out a lighted taper will only fan a larger flame into a big fire, if there be fuel enough. When in 1847 Semmelweis made the startling announcement that puerperal fever is a septic process due to infection from without, he set himself up against the accepted doctrine of twenty centuries, and brought down upon his head the ridicule, and derision,

and scorn, of the entire profession. Nor did the persecution let up, but continued through many years, to the close of life, when he died unhonored and unsung. Through it all Semmelweis remained true to his convictions, hanging on with fanatical persistency, and to-day no intelligent physician can be found who does not believe in the Semmelweis theory. Harvey was opposed by the entire profession for proclaiming the circulation of the blood. And I want to say it was the christian ministry, and not the profession, who upheld and encouraged Harvey. Jenner is another well-known instance, where a man against formidable opposition was true to his convictions and finally triumphed.

In 1809 there was in McDowell County, Kentucky, an humble physician, to whom a woman came sixty miles on horse-back and asked him to remove an enormous tumor. He requested several of his neighboring physicians to assist him, but "they all with one consent began to make excuse." Nothing daunting, he appointed a day and began the operation. The matter had been noised abroad, and a large crowd of excited people had collected around the doctor's little office. The sheriff of the county happening by, inquired, "Why all this tumult—are the Indians about? (Kentucky was then a frontier State). "No, no," exclaimed the mob, "worse than the Indians; there is a man in there about to kill a woman." The sheriff, after further inquiry, said to them, "Let us wait and see if he kills her; if he does not, all well and good; if he does I have nothing further to say." When Jesus Christ left the glories of his Father's mansion and came to save a dying world, they went by night, took him with staves and brought him before Pilate, and when Pilate took water and washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, saying, "I find no fault in him," they cried out all the more, "Crucify him, crucify him." And when Ephraim McDowell took his scalpel in hand, intent only on saving the life of that poor trembling woman, who lay upon his table with no anæsthetic save her faith in her doctor, the angry, tumultous, excited mob surged around his office and cried out aloud for his blood. Thanks be unto Him who hath said, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayst prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Jos. I, 7), that while they did crucify our Lord and Saviour, he arose again and through him we have eternal life, and that while Ephraim McDowell was hooted and persecuted and threatened, he stood firm, and though dead he yet liveth and speaketh to us to-night, and through that day's work over 800,000 years have already been added to the life of woman.

III. Another unfailing mark of a true physician is *applicating* energy of purpose. I do not refer to the mere practice of medicine. A man may be prompt and energetic in visiting his patients, and while this is commendable, yet he may do it purely for the dollars he earns, and at the same time be the merest tyro and drone in the science of medicine. The profession of medicine rises above this. Medicine is a science; the art or practice of it is only its application to the needs of humanity. Again, while medicine is a science, it is not yet an exact science. And no man can sit down and say, "I know it all; I have no need for further study; I fall back on my own experience to guide me." My, my! "Upon what meat hath this, our Cæsar, fed that he hath grown so tall?" Our doctors do not read and study enough, they don't buy new books and periodicals as they should, nor attend post-graduate courses; they get into grooves, a routine practice; and, as a matter of course, their patients die by routine. Why, I have heard some say, "O, well, a doctor don't need but one course of lectures to practice in this community; now, if I was in a

city I would take another course." Isn't that a pitiable sight, to see a man take the issues of life and death in his hands, and hear him say, "Human life isn't worth enough in this community to justify me taking another course of lectures."

I congratulate the people of North Carolina that our State Medical Society, ably seconded by its legitimate offspring, the Board of Medical Examiners, is fast starving out this class of doctors, and saying to the future doctors, "Come up higher or stay outside." Young men, the finger of science points steadily in one direction—forwards. Nor does it lead down by loafer's corner; nor sluggard's couch; nor by the saloon, nor brothel; nor is your progress in that direction accelerated by sparkling champagne, or the wine which "moveth itself aright." There is an unwritten obligation laid upon every man who espouses the science of medicine, to wit, that he will bend *every energy* he possesses to *perfect* himself for the duties of his work. A clear and comprehensive knowledge of the problems which confront us on every hand is too obvious to remark, yet I doubt if any of us were sufficiently sensible of it until some sudden emergency stared us in the face. Was it a torrent of life-blood? Or was it the necessity of a resection? Or possibly the sudden stopping of the heart under anæsthesia? What pain and awful fear seizes us? O, for light just at this moment on this particular question. What would we give for just ten minutes perusal of our favorite author. We look around for information, eagerly and anxiously, as a benighted wanderer looks for the light of a human dwelling. Yea, only *one word* of assurance from some man who *knows* would be as refreshing as the tip of Lazarus' moistened finger would have been to the parched tongue of Dives. My brother, there is no need of you and I ever being overtaken by such calamity. The sovereignty of labor is nowhere better exemplified than in the *study of medicine.* There is no surer road to success than through your books, your experiments, your laboratories. Emergencies—which are nothing but grand golden opportunities—come to every man, yea, they are on us all the time. If we would make the most of them, we must prepare to meet them, and there is no surer mark of royal blood which flows through every true physician's veins than that he is indefatigable in the study of medicine. This involves immense energy. I like the spirit of the old Norseman whose crest was a pickaxe with the motto: "Either I will find a way or make one."

Energy enables a man to force his way through irksome drudgery and dry details, and carries him onward and upward in every station of life. It accomplishes far more than genius with not half the disappointment. Hence energy of will is called the very central power of character in a man—in a word, it is the man himself. It gives impulse to every action, and soul to every effort. It is will-force of purpose that enables a man to do or be whatever he sets his mind on doing or being. More, intensity of purpose never fails to bring its sure reward. I never spent an hour in hard study in my life that I did not get ten honors for it. I never bent my whole energies on any subject that I was not credited for more than I knew, so productive is a little effort wisely expended. The scriptural injunction is, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

IV. The last distinguishing trait of the true physician which I shall notice is, that he is a full-rounded christian gentleman. In saying this, I would close my eyes to all denominational and doctrinal lines. I care not whether a man be a Methodist, or Baptist, Armenian, or Calvinist, or Protestant, or Romanist, Jew or Gentile, but he must acknowledge allegiance to Him who "spake as man never spake," who made the lame leap for joy, the dumb to shout for gladness, and the sick man to "take up his bed and walk." But you say, "There are plenty of

physicians who have risen to eminence, yet make no pretensions to christianity, but are outspoken sinners." That is true. On the other hand, for every bad man who has ever succeeded as a physician, I can point you to ten christian doctors who are his superiors. Again, whatever measure of success an unrighteous man may have, he falls far short of what he might have accomplished as a christian. In his arraignment of Warren Hastings, Edmund Burke said, "I never knew a bad man that was fit for service that was good. There is always some disqualifying ingredient mixing and spoiling the compound. The man seems paralytic on that side. His muscles there have lost their very tone and character —they cannot move. In short, the accomplishment of any thing good is a physical impossibility for such a man." And this is only another way of putting what Solomon said, in his wisest mood, "as he thinketh in his heart so is he," as a man is in his inner self, in his moral nature, so he will be in his outer self, in his practical exhibit of self, in conduct.

A moral purpose, a controlling moral conviction, gives added force to the words and actions of any man in any sphere. It is not that he has no power without it. It is not that he can never appear to advantage with its lack. But it is, that its possession gives increased potency to his work, secures trustworthiness to his endeavors and the confidence of the people. You feel the moral purpose of the man in the very thing he does or says. How it thrills in his writings, how it sounds out in spoken words. You cannot have an abiding confidence in a minister or a lawyer whose morals you distrust. Would you apply a lower standard to the man in whose hands you place your life and that of your family, to whom you must confess the innermost secrets of your heart? Nay, verily, to do so is to lean upon a "bruised reed."

And I want to say that one of the very best tests of a man's christian character is his *faith in the power of prayer*. You know when "Asa fell sick with a disease in his feet, he sought not the Lord, but the physician." And the next verse adds, "Asa slept with his fathers." In Jer. XVII, 5, we find these words: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, who maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord."

Now, I have no patience with this so-called "Christian Science"—when they ignore the very means God has given us with which to heal our infirmities, and sit around expecting Him to work a miracle in answer to their prayers. "Heaven helps those who help themselves" is as true in medicine as anything else. I believe in the power of prayer, but when I have a case of empyæma, for instance, I do not ask God to cure the patient, and then sit down expecting Him to absorb a half gallon of pus; but I get down on my knees and ask Him to show me what to do, then I get up and take my scalpel and go to work, and I verily believe that if God wanted me to stop, He would send an angel to stay my hand, as when Abraham lifted the gleaming steel above his darling boy. Yes, I believe in the power of prayer, and I would not offer homage to any deity who would not help me in the hour of need. I am so glad that when Ephraim McDowell laid his patient upon the table and while the mob clamored for his life, he went into an inner room and getting down on his knees offered a short prayer. It seems to me as I stand in this presence to-night, that I can almost catch the echo of that petition, reverberating down the corridors of seventy-four years, as with a pure heart and holy hand he lifts his face heavenward and says: "O God, give me, I pray thee, this woman's life for my hire." When Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed, God added fifteen years to his life, and to McDowell's

woman he gave thirteen. Yea, more: in answer to that prayer, God has added on an average ten years to the life of every woman submitting to ovariotomy.

Brethren, as I stand here as your mouthpiece, I stand tearfully but fearlessly. Would you know why? Away up in Randolph, there is, at the old homestead, in her room, on her knees, at this very hour, a precious old mother, beseeching a throne of grace to bless her boy and help him speak forth words of truth and soberness. And let me tell you, young men, when I get beyond my mothers' prayers, and her old Bible, and her God, I shall move out from this country, to some distant planet and run a little world after my own conceited style.

Thus far, I have addressed myself specially to the individual. Now let us consider briefly the profession taken as a whole. Consider for a moment our State Medical Society, composed of over four hundred of the very pick and choice out of two thousand physicians living in the State. What a tremendous power for good or evil the organization carries in its grasp. As the government of a nation is but the reflex of the individuals composing it, so is the influence of a society like ours but the expression of the individual character of its members. We are accustomed to decry great social evils, where in truth they are but the outgrowth of our own perverted lives. We, as a society, meet in some town, and the physicians there, as a body, tender us a so-called banquet. We go as a society, get more or less drunk as a society, and the next day in convention assembled offer a motion of thanks for the "kind and generous hospitality" which made us drunk. O, my brother, can you lose sight of your individual responsibility for your conduct in this matter? Does your brain become so befuddled with Roman punch that you can't tell whether you are yourself or someone else? But I hear some of you young fellows say, "This is the only chance I have to drink champagne and wine." That's true, for when you are at home, you drink corn whiskey at twenty-five cents a pint. You ride on a seven dollar cart or a three dollar saddle all the year 'round, and come up to these annual gatherings expecting to drink "extra-dry," at somebody else's expense. You are a disgrace to the profession. "O," but you say, "I get a good practice all the same." Yes, the public are very lenient towards you, they know you are a miserable old drunkard, and can't help it, and then they say, "You are the best doctor in the neighborhood, when you are sober," and they say, "You won't give medicine when you are drinking," but you know you prescribe every chance you get. These so-called banquets have come to be a nuisance and a term of reproach to the profession. And if we keep this thing up much longer our legislature will be for enacting a law like the one in Georgia, which prevents a physician from ever practising again after having been convicted of drunkenness. I am so glad there are physicians in the grand old city of Wilmington, who, while they throw wide open their homes and hearts to receive us and makes us enjoy our visit here, have the moral courage to say, "No one shall get drunk at our expense." I say, "Hurrah, for these men, than whom there are none nobler, wiser or more gracious." The aftermath of their example shall be as sweet as a sweet-smelling savor, more delightful than the odor of new-mown hay, more far-reaching in its significance than a hundred sermons or a thousand formal protests, such is the power of right living. Let me commend their example to the town where we go next year, and the years to come, as worthy of emulation. But if you will have a banquet, do be as considerate as our Asheville brethren, who gave their banquet the night *after* adjournment and *forty miles away* from the place where the society met, so that those of us who felt under no obligation to get drunk had a chance to get started home.

Who is responsible for these things? Every one who takes any part in them. First, and foremost, I want to say to these old men, "You who are the leading lights in the profession and the pillars of the society, and whom I address reverently yet fearlessly, I charge *you* with helping by your example and influence to spoil the flower of our young manhood in its very bud. Young men come here for their first time, and seeing you indulge in these things, hearing *your* peals of laughter at the popping of champagne corks, say, "Surely if men of such standing and confessed goodness as these indulge in these things, it can be no harm for me to take just a glass or two."

Now some little fellow who always writes a big M. D., after his name (and this reminds me that possibly he is the fellow whose grandfather was a monkey, and the M. D. is intended to signify "descendant of a monkey"), will say, "Long is slandering the profession." I deny the charge. I yield to no man the precedence in admiration and love for the profession. I rejoice that I sprang from the loins of a man who spent his life, yea, who gave his life, in the relief of suffering humanity. And while he left me neither prestige of aristocracy, nor heritage of money or lands, yet by his life he instilled into my heart the desire to succor those in sickness and distress, that I would not exchange for wealth, nor royal titles, nor bluest blood that ever ran. Peace to his ashes and honor to his memory. Of the *old* men in the profession, I am especially fond. All along some of them have been indissolubly linked with my career. My preceptor an elderly man, my first partner an old man, my second partner an old man, and I can never forget that, when in my earlier experiences I lost two surgical cases within a week, it was an old man who quit his immediate practice, and rode many miles to my relief. It seemed the very heavens would close down around me, and I said, "I will throw up the sponge and quit." Then this dear old man put his hand on my shoulder and said, "My son, do not talk that way; you are all right; just press forward." If it had not been for the old men I could not have stood where I do to-night. I go further, and say, we young men should not be too anxious to lay these old men on the shelf. Many of them have served their day and generation and done it well. One by one they drop out of the ranks. Every year some of them who were with us the year before fail to answer at roll call. This year it was the sweet-spirited Beall, the cultured Aske, the fearless surgeon, Budd; last year it was the untiring McDonald; and so the list grows. These old men, the *pioneers* of medicine, and the workmen who need not to be ashamed. When you and I were in swaddling clothes, or perchance our eyes had not seen the light of day, they were struggling to elucidate the science of medicine and establish the practice upon a firm basis. They had to contend with the very powers of darkness, ignorance, superstition, witchcraft, prejudice, powers which combined make a gloom more dense, more impenetrable, and emitting more deadly miasmata than the tropical forests of "Darkest Africa," through which Stanley wandered and literally hewed his way for so many weeks and months without ever seeing the sun. May God bless the old men.

But with all that, I want to say to the young men of the profession, there is no need that we perpetuate the errors of our fathers. I would rather have the gratitude of my son than the approbation of my father. My father may have been in error, my son will know whether or not I am wrong. The future of our society rests not with these old men, but with you. Brethren, let us be men. I like the spirit of my little boy's reply when asked if he was going to be a doctor. "O no, I am going to be a *man*." The little fellow had caught the idea

that to be a doctor does not always mean to be a man. (Probably the effect of home influence.)

"This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

We have passed in rapid review some of the distinguishing marks of the physician's character. Those which are conspicuous by their absence are advertising, charlatanism, rascality, unjust criticisms, drunkenness. That these are characteristics of bad men and are opposed to all real progress there can be no question, and it is equally true that all of these vices may be largely eliminated from our ranks. But to do it, we must be stalwart men, thoroughly grounded in the essentials of a true character. When the Persian youth learned to tell the truth, keep a secret, and draw the bow, they over-ran all Greece. When our doctors learn the full force of character as applied to the physician, when they learn to eschew evil and choose good, when they learn to draw the bow of scientific accuracy instead of depending upon routine, haphazard methods—then, and not till then, will this grand old ship of science—our profession—be freed from the slimy arms of the loathsome octopi which seek to drag her beneath the chilly waves of ignorance and superstition, and feed upon the life-blood of every man, woman and child entrusted to her care.

I have endeavored to show you that the true physician, the true friend of science, the true guardian of people's health, is he whose character is founded and built upon the rock of *eternal truth*. That he is distinguished by decision of character, the courage of his convictions, intense energy of purpose, the graces of a christian gentleman, and an abiding faith in the mercies of God. Is the grand old ship of which I just spoke manned by such men as this? Let us see. Upon the bow of this magnificent vessel, with her heaving engines, electric lights, polished sides, elegant appointments, matchless record, and untold possibilities, I see emblazoned in golden letters that magic word—*Character*. Upon the insignia of the commanding officer I see the one word—*Character*. Upon the cap of every subaltern I see the word—*Character*. I turn to the men, and looking into their faces I see as in a mirror of their hearts—*Character*. *Character* is in every command. *Character* is in every turn of the pilot's wheel. *Character* is everywhere. Sail on, lovely mistress of the sea, we cannot doubt thee. We fear for thee neither wind nor wave. The *Character* which thou art shall protect thee, and while thine enemies may detract, while the storm may rage, and the billows break over thee, we know thou wilt *roll on*, in spite of all opposition, until thou hast carried thy precious cargo of human health and life within the haven of safety.

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